

--42. The digital contents operation method of claim 21, wherein the license is generated only from the license-issuing center.--

--43. The digital contents decrypting method of claim 22, wherein the license is generated only from the license-issuing center.--

--44. The digital contents decompression method of claim 23, wherein the license is generated only from the license-issuing center.--

--45. The system of claim 24, wherein the license is generated only from the license-issuing center.--

--46. The digital contents operation system of claim 25, wherein the license is generated only from the license-issuing center.--

--47. The digital contents decrypting system of claim 27, wherein the license is generated only from the license-issuing center.--

--48. The digital contents decompression system of claim 29, wherein the license is generated only from the license-issuing center.--

REMARKS

Claims 1-48 are pending. By this Amendment, claims 1, 2, 9, 10, 16, 17, 20-25, 27 and 29 are amended, and new claims 35-48 are added. No new matter is added.

Reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested.

The attached Appendix includes marked-up copies of each rewritten claim (37 C.F.R. §1.121(c)(1)(ii)).

Applicants thank Examiners Hayes and Le for the courtesy extended to Applicants' representative, Mr. Luo, during the January 14, 2003, personal interview. The substance of the interview is incorporated in the remarks set forth below.

The Office Action rejects claims 1-34 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as anticipated by U.S. Patent 5,892,900 to Ginter et al. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The Office Action asserts that Ginter discloses all elements recited in claims 1-34. However, Applicants respectfully submit that Ginter does not disclose or suggest a license-issuing center that is independent from the provider and/or the seller of digital contents, as recited in claims 1-34.

As discussed at the January 14, 2003, personal interview, Ginter discloses a virtual distribution environment (VDE) that secures, administers and audits electronic information use. See col. 2, lines 20-23, and Fig. 1. Ginter discloses an independent financial provider 212, such as MasterCard or Visa, which keeps a consumer's credit account. See Fig. 1 and col. 54, lines 44-49. However, this independent financial provider 212 is not associated with generating or issuing licenses. Nor does Ginter provide any specific teaching or disclosure that the independent financial provider issues, or is even capable of issuing, licenses. Therefore, this independent financial provider is not a license-issuing center that is independent from a provider or a seller of digital contents, as recited in claims 1-34.

Ginter discloses a financial clearing house 116 which generates and sends bills to consumers, and generates and sends reports and payments to distributors. See Fig. 2 and col. 56, lines 30-39. The financial clearing house 116 is associated with financial matters and not associated with licensing matters. Nor does Ginter provide any specific teaching or disclosure that the financial clearing house issues, or is even capable of issuing, licenses. Thus, the financial clearing house is not a license-issuing center that is independent from a provider or a seller of digital contents, as recited in claims 1-34.

Ginter discloses methods of negotiation for agreements such as licenses. See col. 269, lines 19-21. The agreements are part of control information. See col. 10, lines 32-46. The control information is called "rules and controls," and is provided by an information content creator 102, such as a video production studio 204. See Figs. 1 and 2 and col. 54, lines 26-32 and 43-44. Thus, the agreements and licenses are provided by the information content

creator 102, without any involvement of an independent entity. Therefore, Ginter does not disclose or suggest a license-issuing center that is independent from a provider or a seller of digital contents, as recited in claims 1-34.

During the January 14 personal interview, Examiner Le asserted that, under Ginter's extensive teaching, any party that is independent from the audio/video creator/distributor, such as the financial clearing house, may be a license-issuing entity. Applicants respectfully submit that this assertion is not supported in Ginter. As discussed above, Ginter's licenses are provided by the information content creator 102, without any involvement of an independent entity. Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner identify the specific portion in Ginter that discloses an independent party that issues license. The Examiner is required to identify specifically where teaching is found to establish prima facie case of anticipation, so that Applicants can recognize and seek to counter the grounds for rejection. See Chester v. Miller, 15 USPQ2d 1333, 1337 (Fed. Cir. 1990).

For at least the above reasons, as discussed in the January 14 personal interview, Ginter does not teach or disclose each and every element recited in claims 1-34. Accordingly, Ginter does not disclose or suggest the subject matter recited in claims 1-34. Withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1-34 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) is respectfully requested.

New claims 35-48 are added to recite that the license is generated only from the license-issuing center. Applicants respectfully submit that, during the January 14 personal interview, the Examiner's asserted that Ginter discloses that a license may be generated by any party. This is an admission that Ginter does not disclose that the license is generated only from the license-issuing center. Thus, new claims 35-48 are patentably distinguishable from Ginter and believed to be patentable.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants submit that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of the claims are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicants' undersigned representative at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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JAO:GXL/hs

Attachment:
Appendix

Date: January 31, 2003

OLIFF & BERRIDGE, PLC
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<p>DEPOSIT ACCOUNT USE AUTHORIZATION Please grant any extension necessary for entry; Charge any fee due to our Deposit Account No. 15-0461</p>
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APPENDIX

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Changes to Claims:

The following is a marked-up version of the amended claims:

1. (Amended) A license-issuing method for issuing an electronic license for certifying that usage of digital contents is permitted to a specific user, the digital contents being provided by at least one of a provider and a seller, the method comprising:
 - generating information for verification from a license-issuing center, the license-issuing center being independent from the at least one of the provider and the seller,
 - the information for verification required to verify legitimacy of an electronic license;
 - inputting information to specify the information for verification;
 - generating the electronic license from the license-issuing center, the electronic license able to~~which can~~ be verified by the information for verification specified by the input information to specify the information for verification; and
 - outputting the generated electronic license.
2. (Amended) A license-issuing system which issues an electronic license for certifying that usage of digital contents is permitted to a specific user, the digital contents being provided by at least one of a provider and a seller, the system comprising:
 - verification information generation means for generating information for verification from a license-issuing center, the license-issuing center being independent from the at least one of the provider and the seller, the information for verification required to verify legitimacy of an electronic license;
 - verification information output means for outputting the information for verification generated by the verification information generation means;
 - license generation means which receives information to specify information for verification and generates the electronic license from the license-issuing center, ~~that the~~

electronic license able to~~ean~~ be verified by the information for verification specified by the received information; and

license output means for outputting the electronic license generated by the license generation means.

9. (Amended) A license intermediation method for intermediating a request for an electronic license for certifying that usage of digital contents is permitted to a specific user, the digital contents being provided by at least one of a provider and a seller, the method comprising:

receiving a first license request by the at least one of the provider and the seller, the first license request including~~which~~ is a request for issuance of the electronic license for certifying that the usage of specific digital contents is permitted;

preparing, by the at least one of the provider and the seller, a second license request for requesting the issuance of the electronic license requested in the received first license request; and

outputting the prepared second license request to a license-issuing center, the license-issuing center being independent from the at least one of the provider and the seller.

10. (Amended) A license intermediation system that intermediates a request for an electronic license for certifying that usage of digital contents is permitted to a specific user, the digital contents being provided by at least one of a provider and a seller, the system comprising:

license request receiving means for receiving a first license request, by the at least one of the provider and the seller, which the first license request including~~is~~ is a request for the issuance of the electronic license for certifying that the usage of specific digital contents is licensed;

license request preparing means for generating, from the at least one of the provider and the seller, a second license request for requesting the issuance of the electronic license requested in the received first license request; and

license request output means for outputting the second license request prepared in the license request preparing means to a license-issuing center, the license-issuing center being independent from the at least one of the provider and the seller.

16. (Amended) An agreement issuing method for allowing intermediation of a request for an electronic license for certifying that usage of digital contents is permitted to a specific user, the digital contents being provided by a provider, the method comprising:

inputting information to the provider to specify an intermediary who intermediates a request for an electronic license for digital contents, wherein the electronic license is issued by a license-issuing center, the license-issuing center being independent from the provider and the intermediary;

inputting information to the provider to specify the digital contents the intermediation of which is permitted to the intermediary;

generating an agreement from the provider for certifying that the intermediation of the request for the electronic license for the specified digital contents is permitted to the specified intermediary; and

outputting the generated agreement to the license-issuing center, wherein the license-issuing center verifies whether the intermediary is a specified intermediary.

17. (Amended) An agreement issuing system which issues an agreement for allowing intermediation of a request for an electronic license for certifying that usage of digital contents is permitted to a specific user, the digital contents being provided by a provider, the system comprising:

agreement generating means which receives, for the provider, information to specify an intermediary that intermediates a request for an electronic license of digital contents and information to specify the digital contents the request for the electronic license of which the intermediary is allowed to intermediate, and generates from the provider an agreement for certifying that the specified intermediary is allowed to intermediate the request for the electronic license of the specified digital contents, where the electronic license is issued by a license-issuing center, the license-issuing center being independent from the provider and the intermediate; and

agreement output means for outputting the agreement generated by the agreement generating means to the license-issuing center, wherein the license-issuing center verifies whether the intermediary is a specified intermediary.

20. (Amended) A feature providing method for providing a user with one or more features, comprising:

storing information for verification to verify an electronic license for certifying that usage of all or part of features is permitted to a specific user;

inputting an electronic license;

verifying legitimacy of the input electronic license using the stored information for verification; and

activating at least part of the features only ~~in the case if~~ it is judged that the input electronic license is legitimate;

wherein the information for verification and the electronic license were generated from a license-issuing center, the one or more features were provided by at least one of a provider and a seller, and the license-issuing center is independent from the at least one of the provider and the seller.

21. (Amended) A digital contents operation method, comprising:

storing information for verification to verify an electronic license for
certifying that operation of digital contents is permitted to a specific user;

inputting an electronic license;

verifying legitimacy of the input electronic license using the stored
information for verification; and

enabling at least part of operations of the digital contents only ~~in the case~~ if it is
judged that the input electronic license is legitimate;

wherein the information for verification and the electronic license were
generated from a license-issuing center, the digital contents were provided by at least one of a
provider and a seller, and the license-issuing center is independent from the at least one of the
provider and the seller.

22. (Amended) A digital contents decrypting method for decrypting encrypted
digital contents, comprising:

storing information for verification to verify an electronic license that certifies
that decrypting of encrypted digital contents is permitted to a specific user;

inputting an electronic license;

verifying legitimacy of the input electronic license using the stored
information for verification; and

decrypting the encrypted digital contents only ~~in the case~~ if it is judged that the
input electronic license is legitimate;

wherein the information for verification and the electronic license were
generated from a license-issuing center, the encrypted digital contents were provided by at
least one of a provider and a seller, and the license-issuing center is independent from the at
least one of the provider and the seller.

23. (Amended) A digital contents decompression method for decompressing compressed digital contents, comprising:

a step for storing information for verification to verify an electronic license that certifies that the decompression of compressed digital contents is permitted to a specific user;

a step for inputting an electronic license;

a step for verifying the legitimacy of the input electronic license using the stored information for verification; and

a step for decompressing the compressed digital contents only ~~in the case~~ if it is judged that the input electronic license is legitimate;

wherein the information for verification and the electronic license were generated from a license-issuing center, the compressed digital contents were provided by at least one of a provider and a seller, and the license-issuing center is independent from the at least one of the provider and the seller.

24. (Amended) A system that provides one or more features to a user, comprising:

verification information storage means for storing information for verification to verify an electronic license that certifies that ~~the~~ usage of all or a part of features of the system is permitted to a specific user; and

license verification means which receives an electronic license and verifies ~~the~~ legitimacy of the received electronic license using the information for verification stored in the verification information storage means, wherein:

at least ~~the~~ part of the features is activated only ~~in the case~~ if it is judged in the license verification means that the received electronic license is legitimate;

wherein the information for verification and the electronic license were generated from a license-issuing center, one or more features were provided by at least one of a provider and a seller, and the license-issuing center is independent from the at least one of the provider and the seller.

25. (Amended) A digital contents operation system, comprising:

verification information storage means for storing information for verification to verify an electronic license that certifies that ~~the~~ operation of digital contents is permitted to a specific user; and

license verification means which receives an electronic license and verifies ~~the~~ legitimacy of the received electronic license using the information for verification stored in the verification information storage means, wherein:

at least ~~the~~ part of the operations of digital contents is enabled only ~~in the~~ ease if it is judged in the license verification means that the received electronic license is legitimate;

wherein the information for verification and the electronic license were generated from a license-issuing center, the digital contents were provided by at least one of a provider and a seller, and the license-issuing center is independent from the at least one of the provider and the seller.

27. (Amended) A digital contents decrypting system for decrypting encrypted digital contents, comprising:

verification information storage means for storing information for verification to verify an electronic license that certifies that ~~the~~ decrypting of encrypted digital contents is permitted to a specific user; and

license verification means which receives an electronic license and verifies the legitimacy of the received electronic license using the information for verification stored in the verification information storage means, wherein:

the encrypted digital contents are decrypted only ~~in the case~~ if it is judged in the license verification means that the received electronic license is legitimate;

wherein the information for verification and the electronic license were generated from a license-issuing center, the encrypted digital contents were provided by at least one of a provider and a seller, and the license-issuing center is independent from the at least one of the provider and the seller.

29. (Amended) A digital contents decompression system for decompressing compressed digital contents, comprising:

means for receiving compressed digital contents to be decompressed;

verification information storage means for storing information for verification to verify an electronic license that certifies that decompression of digital contents is permitted to a specific user; and

license verification means which receives an electronic license and verifies legitimacy of the received electronic license using the information for verification stored in the verification information storage means, wherein:

the compressed digital contents are decompressed only ~~in the case~~ if it is judged in the license verification means that the received electronic license is legitimate;

wherein the information for verification and the electronic license were generated from a license-issuing center, the compressed digital contents were provided by at least one of a provider and a seller, and the license-issuing center is independent from the at least one of the provider and the seller.

Claims 35-48 are added.